



**United States Attorney's Office
District of Columbia**

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NEWS RELEASE

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**Ethiopian Man Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison for
Murdering Fellow Ethiopian in Brazen, Daylight Shooting**

WASHINGTON - A 53-year-old Ethiopian, Adane Kebede, was sentenced today to 20 years in prison for the brazen, broad-daylight shooting of a fellow Ethiopian, Abiy Bezabih, on December 18, 2006, U.S. Attorney Jeffrey A. Taylor announced. The shooting occurred near the intersection of 12th Street and U Street, NW, in front of a 7-11, at about 3:30 p.m. The sentence was imposed by the Honorable Frederick Weisberg in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia before a courtroom filled with the victim's family and friends. The defendant faces deportation at the conclusion of his sentence.

On February 2, 2009, the defendant pled guilty to second degree murder while armed and a firearms offense in connection with this matter. At the prior hearing, the defendant was placed under oath and admitted that he and Mr. Bezabih were born in the same town in Ethiopia, and knew each other growing up. Kebede emigrated to the United States in the early 1970s and eventually settled in Oakland, California, where he worked as a security guard. At one point, Mr. Bezabih asked Kebede to sponsor him for citizenship in the United States, but Kebede refused. Mr. Bezabih eventually emigrated to the United States much later and settled in the Washington, D.C. area.

In the Fall of 2006, a childhood friend of both Kebede and Mr. Bezabih came to the United States from Ethiopia for a vacation. The friend grew up in the same Ethiopian town as Kebede and Mr. Bezabih and, even though the friend was somewhat older than Kebede and Mr. Bezabih, he knew both men. During that visit, Kebede learned that Mr. Bezabih was living in Washington, D.C., and stated that he would like to visit him.

The friend came to Washington, D.C. in early December and Kebede made plans to travel to Washington as well. His plans were to visit with the friend and Mr. Bezabih. Kebede arrived in Washington, D.C. on December 15, 2006, and later checked into a hotel in Germantown, MD, the same day. Among the items that Kebede brought with him were a Highpoint 9mm semi-automatic pistol and ammunition for the pistol.

On the morning of December 18, 2006, Kebede arranged to meet with Mr. Bezabih and the mutual childhood friend from Ethiopia at Dukem restaurant, which is located at the intersection of 12th and U Streets, NW. The friend and Kebede arrived about 2:00 p.m. and had some food. Mr. Bezabih arrived about 3:30 p.m. He parked across U Street from the restaurant, in front of the 7-11. The friend and Kebede exited the restaurant and crossed the street to greet Mr. Bezabih.

The friend went first and reached Mr. Bezabih at the curb in front of the 7-11. The friend greeted Mr. Bezabih, then Kebede followed. Kebede approached Mr. Bezabih and pointed a handgun towards him. Kebede fired one shot into Mr. Bezabih, striking him in the neck, and Mr. Bezabih slowly collapsed onto the ground. Kebede then fled the scene. He made his way to Whitelaw's store at the intersection of 13th and T Streets, NW. Kebede went inside and inquired how he could hail a cab into Maryland. When he exited the store, a police officer detained him. The police found in Kebede's pocket the same Highpoint pistol that he had used to shoot Mr. Bezabih, and \$3,900 in U.S. currency.

Abiy Bezabih died from the gunshot wound inflicted by Adane Kebede. The medical examiner conducted an autopsy and concluded that the cause of death was a single gunshot wound to the body. The manner of death was homicide.

Today's sentencing was dominated by statements by the victim's family and friends paying tribute to Mr. Bezabih. Mr. Bezabih's wife and son addressed the Court, as did other relatives and friends. They discussed how Mr. Bezabih had been a prominent labor organizer in Ethiopia, and had sought and received political asylum in the United States. The speakers emphasized his various good works and kind nature; one describing him as "noble."

Today's sentence imposed by the Court was near the top of the voluntary sentencing guidelines.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Taylor praised Detectives Stanley Farmer, Michael Fulton and Brett Smith, who conducted a wide-ranged investigation in which authorities pursued leads in D.C., Oakland and Ethiopia. Their detailed investigation and quick efforts locating witnesses were essential to solving what initially appeared to be a random shooting. U.S. Attorney Taylor praised paralegals Debra Joyner and Marian Russell, who provided critical support efforts. Finally, U.S. Attorney Taylor praised Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven Snyder, who led the investigation, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Pearlman, who provided critical assistance in the completion of the investigation.

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